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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/535,178	02/15/2006	Tsukasa Yoshida	Q85474	5671
23373	7590	09/27/2006	EXAMINER	
SUGHRUE MION, PLLC 2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W. SUITE 800 WASHINGTON, DC 20037			SUTTON, ANDREW W	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3765	

DATE MAILED: 09/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

NT

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/535,178	YOSHIDA, TSUKASA	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Andrew W. Sutton	3765	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 May 2005.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 17 May 2005 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>5/17/05</u> .	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____. 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.
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DETAILED ACTION

Specification

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it exceeds the 150-word limit. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

The specification is objected to due for a confusing language on page 6 lines 31-22 where the applicant states, "in a longitudinal direction therof approximately leaning a bow to form a slender plate shape." Clarification is needed.

The specification (claims and abstract included) is objected to, due to the word spacing being very small on various lines throughout the application making it hard to read and determine the individual words.

Information Disclosure Statement

The reference US 4,067,787 should be numbered 4,067,487.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The applicant states that the elastic body can be attachably/detachably mounted to a shoehorn portion of a shoehorn. The examiner is

unclear as to what the applicant means by this, as the applicant declares the device in its entirety a shoehorn. Clarification is needed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over NS

Planning KK (JP 2002-719894) in view of Chaplin (US 6,221,034) in further view of Mori (JP 2006-280287). Planning illustrates in Figs. 1 and 2 a shoehorn with a grip section 1 and 2 that folds into two parts at a central location to reduce the length of the shoehorn by half. The shoehorn includes a backscratcher 4 located at one end of the shoehorn. Planning does not teach the hand having a bent shape in the longitudinal direction.

Chaplin illustrates in Fig. 1 a backscratcher that includes a bent handle. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the bent shape of Chaplin with the handle of Planning to provide a backscratcher that would be easier to use, due to the bent shape. Planning does not explicitly teach the use of an elastic body that is removable. Mori illustrates in Figs. 1-5 a backscratcher with an elastic body 6 for massaging that is detachable via the belt 8. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the elastic body of Mori to the device of Planning/Chaplin to provide a backscratcher that also can function as a massager.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2-3 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: Applicant teaches structure to the elastic body to allow for attachment to the shoehorn that is not shown in the prior art

Conclusion

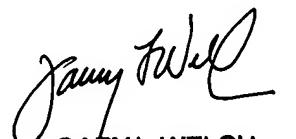
The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See form PTO-892.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andrew W. Sutton whose telephone number is (571) 272-6093. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 7:30-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gary L. Welch can be reached on (571) 272-4996. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

AWS
21 September 2006



GARY L. WELCH
PRIMARY EXAMINER